

# Forensic and Technical Services

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Solving cases and convicting criminals frequently depend on the unique support of scientific and technical personnel assigned to the Forensic and Technical Services

Division. Forensic Analysts at the Postal Inspection Service's National Forensic Laboratory in Dulles, Virginia, and three field laboratories provide expert examinations and testimony on evidence submitted by Postal Inspectors for document, fingerprint, chemical, and physical evidence analysis. Lab personnel respond to the most critical and complex crime investigations and assist in processing and evaluating evidence. Postal Inspection Service chemists are on hand to provide scientific analyses of suspected controlled substances transported through the U.S. Mail.

During FY 2002, forensic staff assisted on-site with armed robberies in California, a major mail theft incident in Chicago, and various search scenes related to the anthrax mailings. Postal Inspection Service forensic laboratory experts conducted 3,427 forensic examinations during FY 2002 and identified 2,457 violators of postal statutes. Forensic analysts made 62 court appearances to provide expert testimony.

The Digital Evidence Unit (DEU) of the Forensic and Technical Services Division supports criminal investigations by assisting Postal Inspectors with the collection, preservation, recovery, and analysis of computer-based evidence. Using state-of-the-art hardware and forensic software, Inspectors and



Forensic specialists from the Postal Inspection Service's National Forensic Laboratory in Dulles, Virginia, opened the seams of colorful jackets found in suspect Express Mail parcels sent to Hickory, North Carolina, from Thailand. The jackets had an inner lining of burlap, which forensics testing showed had been soaked in opium.

Photo by Forensic Photographer Ken Bauer

Analysts from this unit work with Postal Inspectors to execute search warrants and conduct forensic analyses of seized computers and related equipment.

Digital evidence contributes to the successful resolution of investigations ranging from child exploitation to financial fraud and identity takeovers via the mail. For example, a timely analysis provided by the DEU revealed that a fugitive from a case investigated by a Florida Division Inspector was using an Internet address at an office in Costa Rica, resulting in his arrest by local police. Critical evidence was also obtained by DEU staff to support the conviction of numerous cases involving child sexual exploitation. During FY 2002, Postal Inspectors submitted 545 requests to DEU staff for the examination of evidence.

The Forensic and Technical Services Division also supports Postal Inspectors in complex surveillance and security endeavors. Forensic staff provide support for security, mail screening, communications, and other technical equipment needed for special events, including those designated by the Department for Homeland Security as National Security events. The division provides equipment, training, and field responses to ensure the safety of personnel and to assist case Inspectors in proper evidence-gathering techniques. Specially trained Inspectors and technicians have used their expertise to help resolve almost every high-profile case discussed in this report.

Staff members oversee the selection, training, and qualification of Postal Inspectors assigned to conduct polygraph examinations. Postal Inspector-Examiners scheduled 833 polygraph exams for 312 cases during the fiscal year and contributed to the solution of approximately 104 cases as a result of pre-test and post-test interviews conducted incident to the examinations. Included were 29 polygraph examinations conducted in support of anthrax and anthrax-hoax investigations this past year.



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